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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 10/23/08

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ARTICLES:

- (1) 8-nation joint poll on public attitudes toward U.S.: Obama overwhelming in popularity; Many people's image of America worsened after Bush inauguration

Eight countries' newspaper publishing companies—including the Yomiuri Shimbun and the Guardian, a British newspaper—conducted a joint public opinion survey to probe public attitudes toward America. On Nov. 4, the United States will elect a new president. With the presidential election just around the corner, the survey found that Senator Barack Obama, the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, was gathering high expectations in all countries and markedly ahead of Senator John McCain, the Republican Party's nominee. In the survey, the Bush administration got low ratings, apparently leading to the public mindset seeking a change of administration in the United States.

Questions & Answers (Figures shown in percentage)

J=Japan; UK=Britain; F=France; C=Canada; M=Mexico; B=Belgium; S=Switzerland; P=Poland

Q: If you were eligible to vote in the upcoming U.S. presidential election, who would you choose between McCain and Obama?

J UK F C M B S P  
McCain 13 15 5 14 13 8 7 26  
Obama 61 64 68 70 46 62 83 43  
Neither 13 7 9 3 28 10 7 4  
No answer (N/A) 13 14 18 13 13 20 3 26

Q: Do you think the Republican Party's McCain would be a good president or a bad president?

J UK F C M B S P  
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A very good president 3 -- 1 4 2 -- 1 5  
A good president 29 -- 19 37 35 -- 37 52  
A bad president 30 -- 36 30 28 -- 42 9  
A very bad president 3 -- 12 12 6 -- 10 0  
N/A 35 -- 32 17 29 -- 12 34

Q: Do you think the Democratic Party's Obama would be a good president or a bad president?

J UK F C M B S P  
A very good president 11 -- 10 22 11 -- 21 19  
A good president 53 -- 62 59 50 -- 68 40  
A bad president 9 -- 3 6 13 -- 4 11  
A very bad president 1 -- 1 2 2 -- 1 1  
N/A 26 -- 24 11 24 -- 5 30

Q: Has your impression of America improved or worsened since President Bush was inaugurated in 2001?

J UK F C M B S P  
Improved very much 1 2 0 3 2 -- 0 3  
Improved 18 19 7 10 21 -- 8 36  
Worsened 54 44 56 42 48 -- 56 38  
Worsened very much 9 23 19 35 18 -- 30 7  
N/A 18 12 18 10 11 -- 6 17

Q: Do you think your country's relationship with the U.S. is in good shape or in bad shape, or do you otherwise think it is neither in good shape nor in bad shape?

J UK F C M B S P  
Good 16 49 38 43 23 -- 20 43  
Neither good nor bad 62 30 30 29 43 -- 54 45  
Bad 19 18 25 14 28 -- 19 8  
N/A 3 4 7 14 6 -- 6 4

Q: Do you think the next president should pull the U.S. troops out of Iraq?

J UK F C M B S P  
Yes 73 -- 76 75 86 -- 88 83  
No 17 -- 13 16 10 -- 10 11  
N/A 10 -- 11 9 4 -- 3 5

Q: (Only those who answered "yes" to the foregoing question) When do you think the U.S. troops should be pulled out?

J UK F C M B S P

Within next year 50 -- 63 53 68 -- 57 58

Within 5 years 15 -- 26 34 6 -- 36 22

After Iraq has recovered public security 32 -- 8 7 21 -- 6 18

N/A 3 -- 3 6 5 -- 1 2

Q: Do you think the next president should not launch a military attack against Iran, which is pushing ahead with its nuclear development, or do you think it might be unavoidable to do so depending on the circumstances?

J UK F C M B S P

No attack should be made 70 47 51 57 68 -- 57 41

It might be unavoidable to conduct attack 21 42 33 28 19 -- 39 48

N/A 9 11 16 15 13 -- 5 11

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Q: Do you think the next president should grapple with global warming and abnormal climate issues more proactively than the Bush administration, the same, or less?

J UK F C M B S P

More proactively 84 -- 88 79 91 -- 94 88

The same as the Bush administration 11 -- 6 13 4 -- 4 7

Less proactively 1 -- 1 3 2 -- 1 2

N/A 4 -- 5 5 3 -- 1 4

Joint-polling newspapers

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Japan), The Guardian (United Kingdom), Le Monde (France), La Presse (Canada), Reforma (Mexico), Le Soir (Belgium), Le Temps (Switzerland), Gazeta Wyborcza (Poland).

Polling methodology

Japan

Date of survey: Oct. 4-5

Subjects of survey: A total of 3,000 persons were chosen from among all eligible voters throughout the country (at 250 locations on a stratified two-stage random-sampling basis).

Method of implementation: Door-to-door visits for face-to-face interviews.

Number of valid respondents: 1,787 persons.

Breakdown of respondents: Men-48 PERCENT , women-52 PERCENT .

U.K.: Oct. 10-12, telephone-based survey, 1,007 persons.

France: Oct. 8-9, face-to-face survey, 1,000 persons.

Canada: Oct. 5-9, telephone-based survey, 1,500 persons.

Mexico: Sept. 27, telephone-based survey, 850 persons.

Belgium: Sept. 12-19, telephone-based survey, 1,007 persons.

Switzerland: Oct. 6-10, telephone-based survey, 600 persons.

Poland: Sept. 15-16, telephone-based survey, 1,000 persons.

(Note) The sign "--" denotes that the question was not asked. The total percentage may not come to 100 PERCENT due to rounding.

(2) DPJ may hold "thorough deliberations" on financial functions strengthening bill; Bill's passage in October uncertain

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)

October 23, 2008

A bill amending the Financial Functions Strengthening Law is being used as tool for maneuvering between the ruling and opposition camps over the timing of the dissolution of the House of Representatives and a snap election. The bill is designed to allow the government to inject public funds into regional financial institutions. Prime Minister Taro Aso positions the legislation as the main feature of a planned second additional economic stimulus package. The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) sees the government as planning capital injections for the Norinchukin Bank, a banking institution mainly for farmers, as a problematical move. The DPJ has

stepped up its attack on the ruling camp, warning that if dissolution of the Lower House is further delayed, it will take its time thoroughly deliberating the bill. Although the government and ruling camp intend to find common ground with the DPJ, it remains to be seen whether the bill will clear the Diet before the end of this month, depending on how they respond.

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Azuma Koshiishi, chairman of the DPJ caucus in the House of Councillors, said in a meeting of all DPJ lawmakers yesterday: "If (the ruling bloc) takes a stance that the DPJ should approve everything, we will not approve the Financial Functions Strengthening Bill." He then explicitly said: "We may change our basic policy if the dissolution of the Lower House is moved forward."

The basic policy means that the DPJ will approve a second additional budget and cooperate on an early passage of the bill amending the new Antiterrorism Special Measures Law designed to extend the Japan's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean.

In a meeting on Oct. 21 of directors from the Lower House Committee on Financial Affairs, the DPJ criticized the government's plan to inject capital into the Norinchukin, arguing: "The agricultural cooperative is an LDP support base." The main opposition party intends to strongly pursue the government with a revision of the bill in mind.

Meanwhile, the government and ruling camp plan to submit the legislation to the Lower House on the 24th. Their plan is that the bill would clear the Lower House on the 28th and it would be adopted by the Upper House on the 31st.

LDP Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Tadamori Oshima told reporters yesterday: "I would like to humbly listen to the DPJ's view." The DPJ, however, intends to ascertain how the government and ruling coalition will act, while its financial taskforce will discuss today problematical points of the government-drafted bill. The rift between the ruling and opposition parties has grown wider. A senior LDP Diet Affairs Committee member said: "If the opposition delays deliberations, such would demonstrate that the opposition is reluctant to deal with the financial crisis." Some take the view in political circles that the legislation would become a tool to bring about Lower House dissolution.

(3) New Komeito showing irritation at Prime Minister Aso for not dissolving Lower House quickly

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Abridged slightly)  
October 23, 2008

The New Komeito, the coalition partner of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is starting to display an irritation at Prime Minister Taro Aso for assuming a lukewarm attitude toward the dissolution of the House of Representatives. The New Komeito has said that it is desirable for the prime minister to dissolve the Lower House as quickly as possible. One New Komeito member said: "If he continues to take an indecisive position, our relationship of trust with the prime minister and the LDP will be undermined."

Yesterday New Komeito Policy Research Council Deputy Chairman Keigo Matsuya along with Yamaguchi Prefectural Assembly members called on Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) to discuss cooperation in the next Lower House election in the prefecture.

Matsuya tried to feel out the timing of Lower House dissolution. Kawamura, however, revealed the outlook alone that the prime minister would make a decision late this month, saying: "I want to

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return to my home constituency, but I can't say that because there is a tense atmosphere."

Aso and the LDP leadership initially planned an early Lower House dissolution, riding on the momentum of the LDP presidential election. The New Komeito and its main support body Soka Gakkai launched full-scale preparations for the election. However, Aso has now placed priority on economic measures rather than the Lower House dissolution due to the U.S.-originated financial crisis. Therefore, the New Komeito has been nervous about Aso's real intention.

The New Komeito has been preparing for a Nov. 30 election. If the election is pushed back beyond to Nov. 30, there is a possibility that it would be put off to next spring or later since the political schedule for December is tight because of the fiscal 2009 budget compilation and tax system reform. The New Komeito cannot accept this idea since it attaches priority to the Tokyo Metropolitan assembly election next summer.

(4) Japanese economy once again under dark clouds 10 years after collapse of LTCBJ

MAINICHI (Page 9) (Full)  
October 9, 2008

October 23 will mark the 10th anniversary of the temporary nationalization of the Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan (LTCBJ) after its collapse caused by massive amounts of bad loans resulting from the bursting of the asset-inflated bubble economy. Japan's financial crisis at the time peaked with the failure of the LTCBJ. The incident also gave rise to financial industry reorganization. Now 10 years after the incident, Shinsei Bank, which took over the LTCBJ, is suffering from a poor business performance. The financial crisis that started in the U.S. is becoming serious. Mainichi Shimbun gives an overview of the 10 years since the failure of the bank.

Takashi Anzai, president of Seven Bank, who once served as the president of the nationalized LTCBJ, lamented the collapse of Lehman Brothers on September 15, saying, "This is a recurrence of the same crisis." The Japanese economy around the time when the LTCBJ went down was also in great turmoil.

The management crisis of LTCBJ surfaced in June 1998. Having been made the target of market players, who wrapped themselves up in suspicion, the bank's share prices plummeted. With many leading banks selling off shares, instability of the financial system built up immediately.

The government and the Diet rushed to prepare related bills, urged by the market movements and nationalized the LTCBJ. A total of about 7.5 trillion yen in public money was pumped into many other banks in the spring of 1999.

Acceptance of public money means that the bank was placed under state control. In an effort to repay the borrowed public money, leading banks successively integrated their management in the hope of recovering profit-earning capacity. There were 20 major banks before the collapse of the LTCBJ. These banks were integrated into six financial groups.

The failure of the LTCBJ also affected the reorganization of industrial circles. Shinsei Bank, which came under the wing of a

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foreign company, refused in 2000 to abandon loan claims on Sogo Department store, one its major borrowers. As a result, the department store went under. After being integrated into Seibu Department Store, Sogo came under the umbrella of Seven & i Holdings.

Approximately 8 trillion yen in public money was pumped into the LTCBJ for writing off bad loans. About 3.6 trillion yen was to be shouldered by the public. Former President Katsunobu Onogi was arrested on suspicion of violation of the Commercial Code. However, the Supreme Court found him not guilty in July of this year. The responsibility for the collapse of the LTCBJ is still in limbo.

In the meantime, the present financial crisis occurred, triggered by

the collapse of the housing market in the U.S. When the failure of Lehman Brothers threw the market into chaos, the U.S. government decided to pump public money into it. What has happened looks just like what happened in Japan when the LTCBJ collapsed. The collapse of the LTCBJ was a problem that involved Japan alone. However, the financial crisis that started in the U.S. has spread all over the world. As such, when this crisis will end is unknown. Dark clouds are once again looming over the Japanese economy.

(5) Japan-India summit: Decision difficult for Japan on nuclear cooperation due to stance of maintaining NPT

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
October 23, 2008

Prime Minister Taro Aso and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed in their meeting yesterday to work together on a broad range of economic issues, including the liberalization of trade and investment by swiftly concluding an economic partnership agreement (EPA), global warming, and regional development. They also agreed to cooperate in overcoming the ongoing global financial crisis. Aso underlined his willingness to strengthen relations with India, whose economy has been rapidly growing. The focus of attention in future discussions will be on how the two countries should cooperate in securing nuclear and other sources of energy. Japan has been calling for the importance of nuclear non-proliferation as the only victim of nuclear bombing. Finding itself on the horns of a dilemma between this position and calls from the domestic nuclear energy sector for a promising business opportunity in India, the Japanese government may be pressed to make a difficult decision.

Announcement on Yen loans worth 450 billion yen

? Energy

Japan and India recognized the need for energy cooperation, but no progress was made toward an agreement on cooperation. The joint statement noted: "(The two countries) will exchange views and information on their respective nuclear energy policies," and just expressed a willingness to seek chances for cooperation.

India is expected to construct 25-30 new nuclear power plants by 2020. The Indian atomic energy market is expected to grow to 10 trillion yen over the next decade. The U.S. and France have already concluded bilateral nuclear cooperation deals. Russia, China and other emerging countries are considering similar agreements.

Toshiba Corp., Hitachi Ltd., and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd.,  
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and other Japanese nuclear equipment makers are eager to enter the Indian nuclear energy market, but a senior corporate member grumbled: "We would like to sell nuclear reactors to India, but we cannot move forward."

Even so, Japan as the world's sole victim of atomic bombing must continue to be a staunch advocate of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Aso called on India to make efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Singh replied: "I understand that Japan is sensitive about nuclear energy. We would like to work toward a pact at Japan's pace." The Japanese government will try to seek chances for cooperation with India while carefully watching public opinion in the nation.

? EPA negotiations

Japan and India failed to reach a board EPA agreement, because they couldn't narrow their differences over criteria for determining a product's place of origin and a proposal to simplify the procedures for approving generic drug imports from India in Japan. The statement just expressed hope for "an early conclusion to the negotiation," eyeing sometime by the end of this year.

The Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren), the Japan chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Indian Industrial Association held a meeting in Tokyo yesterday and issued a joint report stressing

that "the conclusion of an EPA will contribute to promoting bilateral economic ties." The economic groups also agreed to work together to conclude the stalled new round of World Trade Organization's (WTO) global trade talks (Doha Round) at an early date.

#### ? Infrastructure

The two leaders agreed to work together to set up a fund to finance the proposed Delhi-Mumbai 1,500 km industrial corridor. The 50-50 joint fund, which is expected to be worth 15 billion yen, is likely to be established as early as later this year. Japan also announced plans to provide India with about 450 billion yen in yen loans to help build a freight rail connection between the two cities.

#### ? Global warming countermeasures

Cooperation on climate change edged forward. Japan pledged to offer energy-conservation aid to India, and the two countries also agreed to recognize it desirable to adopt at UN negotiations a long-term goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In the joint statement, India expressed its intention to "share with other nations the goal of halving greenhouse gas emissions by 2050," an agreement reached in the July Hokkaido Lake Toya Summit.

The statement evaluated the sector-specific approach as "an effective means." India had opposed to the idea of setting a long-term goal, claiming that industrialized countries should first make efforts to reduce gas emissions first and then help developing countries' reduction efforts.

(6) Seiron: Take additional sanctions to drive North Korea into corner

SANKEI (Page 13) (Full)  
October 22, 2008

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By Tsutomu Nishioka, professor at Tokyo Christian Institute

Don't be afraid of U.S. delisting of North Korea

The U.S. government delisted North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, even though the "acts of terrorism" so far conducted by that nation have yet to be settled, including its past abductions of Japanese nationals. I strongly protest this decision by the U.S. because it undercuts the war on terror. The delisting of North Korea contains many problem areas. The agreement reached between the U.S. and North Korea on a denuclearization-verification regime is quite sloppy and will seriously affect Japan's security. But here, I would like to look into what impact the delisting decision will have on the abduction issue.

The name of North Korea was added to the U.S. list of terrorism-sponsoring nations in 1988, the year after the incident of the bombing of a KAL airliner in 1988. But the act of abductions was not cited as a reason for the designation of North Korea until 2003. In that year, the U.S. included the abduction issue among the reasons, as a result of efforts by civilians, including me, to work on the U.S. Following this, Japan began to use the U.S. terrorist-sponsor list as a leverage to resolve the abduction issue.

The delisting means that five years of building an entrenchment have gone to waste. In dealing with DPRK leader Kim Jong Il using Washington's list of terrorism-sponsoring nations, Japan briefly won a victory but later the North counterattacked. Still, in delisting Pyongyang, Washington reiterated that it understands the importance of the abduction issue. Japan must make full use of this phrase as a new tool in negotiations with the North at the governmental, parliamentary, and private-sector levels.

Don't allow financial aid

The Japanese government has not properly sent a message to the U.S.

government. For instance, Deputy Secretary of State Armitage notified the three groups - the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea, the National Association for the Rescuing of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea, and the group of Diet members dealing with the abduction issue - for the first time in March 2003 of the U.S. decision to include the abduction issue among the reasons for keeping North Korea on its terrorism black list. But the then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi commented: "There is no definition of terrorism in Japanese law. It is unknown whether abduction is categorized as an act of terrorism." This remark makes us impossible for Japan to oppose the U.S. delisting decision.

Prime Minister Aso said in a press conference following the U.S. delisting decision: "Japan will not lose its leverage on North Korea in negotiating the abduction issue." Whether Japan would lose its leverage or not depends on our nation's determination and actions.

The families' association and the rescue association proposed in March of last year that the government should form a Japanese list of terrorism-sponsoring nations as a measure to prevent aid money from international financial institutions from flowing into North Korea. In revising the North Korean Human Rights Law in late June of the same year, the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, the Democratic Party of Japan, and the New Komeito added this provision: "The

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government must make an appropriate approach to multilateral development banks that will contribute to resolving the abduction issue."

If North Korea devises a scheme to solicit financial aid from the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and other international financial institutions, the government must raise strong opposition and prevent such aid, citing the abduction issue.

Other members of the six-party talks are expected to strongly pressure Japan to join energy aid for North Korea. I support Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura's remark on Oct. 16 that Japan will not join energy aid, even if North Korea establishes a research committee (on the abduction issue), based on the Abe administration's policy that Japan will not join energy aid before progress is made on the abduction issue.

Existing sanctions emasculated

The government has decided to extend Japan's sanctions against North Korea for another six months. The extension is only natural. The sanctions now in force include: (1) prohibiting all imports from North Korea, and Japanese exports of luxury and other items; (2) banning North Korean-registered ships from entering Japanese ports; (3) barring six senior members of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryon) who serve as members of the Supreme People's Congress from reentering Japan in principle once they return to North Korea; and (4) banning chartered flights between Japan and North Korea.

The six senior members are: So Man Sul (Chongryon chairman); Ho Chong Man (Chongryon responsible vice chairman); Yang Su Chong (Chongryon vice chairman, and chairman of the chamber of Commerce and Industry); Kim So Cha (chairperson of the Women's Alliance); Pak Hui Tok (Chongryon Economic Committee vice chairman); and Chang Pyong Tae (Korean University president). A rumor is going on that Pak visited North Korea in May and June this year. He was allowed to reenter Japan because he wrote not North Korea but China as his destination, leaving no record of visiting the North on his reentry permit card. As shown by this case, this sanction measure seems to have been emasculated in effect.

The families' group and the rescue association have insisted that if North Korea continues to try to buy time, Japan should slap additional sanctions on it. Families of abduction victims have been calling for tougher policy measures against North Korea. I hope that Prime Minister Aso, while keeping their calls in mind, will decide to take extra sanctions, including measures: to prohibit all exports from Japan; ban port calls by foreign ships chartered by the North; cancel the system to allow Korean residents in Japan to visit North



Korea with no restrictions; and Japan's own financial sanctions. I expect the prime minister will make this decision.

(7) President Bush sends letter of appreciation to woman in Okinawa who wrote his name in Japanese calligraphy

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 3) (Full)  
October 22, 2008

"Thank you for the beautiful calligraphy of my name." Kunie Takezaki (48), a Japanese calligraphy teacher in Oyama, Ginowan City, recently received a signed letter from U.S. President Bush with

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these words. The letter was sent in appreciation for her letter and a hanging scroll with Japanese calligraphy of the President's name that Ms. Takezaki had written. Having received the letter by way of the Consulate General, Ms. Takezaki said in surprise, "I never imagined that the President would actually reply to my letter."

In the calligraphy for the name of President George Walker Bush, she chose Japanese characters that meant mercy, compassion, king, song, dance, and protection. The choice of characters reflected her wish for him to be a president (king) who values (protects) culture (song and dance) with mercy and compassion.

The signed letter from President Bush reads: "I am grateful for your thoughtful gift"; and, "Laura and I send our best wishes."

Ms. Takezaki has been running a private calligraphy school at her home since 1985. She wrote the U.S. President's name in Japanese calligraphy in 2006. At the time, she felt distressed to see some of her students, American soldiers, being dispatched to Iraq one after another. She said she had come up with this idea (of writing the President's name in calligraphy) to let the U.S. President know how she felt (about the war in Iraq). Ms. Takezaki said, "I am not certain how much of my thought was conveyed to the President, but at least he read my letter. I would like to continue to let people know the warmth of letters hand-written with a brush through the art of calligraphy," renewing her determination to her profession.

SCHIEFFER